

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 000585

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PPD, EUR/CACEN, EUR, EUR/ACE,
EUR/SNEC, EUR/SE

E.O. 12958; N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#) [AM](#) [RU](#)

SUBJECT: ARMENIA PRESS REACTION: KYRGYZSTAN

REF: YEREVAN 575

SUMMARY

1. Colored by Russian President Putin's concurrent visit (March 24-25), public comments in Armenia about the situation in Kyrgyzstan reject speculation that a similar situation exists in Armenia. Some politicians chalked up the change in Bishkek to "Western interference." Even the opposition, once again calling for a "pomegranate" revolution this spring, did not jump to embrace the Kyrgyz revolt as a model. The GOAM warned that the constant threat of renewed conflict with Azerbaijan, recently underscored by an increase in cross-border sniper fire, means, "Armenia would face destruction in the event of domestic turmoil." End Summary.

"ARMENIANS ARE NOT KYRGYZ" - NO REVOLUTION HERE

2. As the events in Kyrgyzstan reached a climax, public comment in Armenia was colored by Russian President Vladimir Putin's concurrent two-day visit to Yerevan. On March 25, MPs from the ruling coalition stumbled over themselves to tell the press, "Armenians are not Kyrgyz. The Kyrgyz events cannot be repeated in Armenia." (MP Shahgeldian - Orinats Yerkir) "Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are in different regions, the political situations are quite different, so the repetition of Kyrgyz events in Armenia is practically impossible." (MP Mkrtchian - ARF Dashnak)

3. Widely reported in the press on March 28, Prime Minister Andranik Markarian continued, "There is a huge difference between the international political situation in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan." PM Markarian went on to refute comparisons not only with Kyrgyzstan, but also Georgia and Ukraine, saying, "That kind of popular protest...is impossible in Armenia because the underlying problems that triggered the unrest do not exist [here.] Democracy continues to develop in Armenia; there are no economic problems...There are no basic reasons here to ignite revolt against the current authorities."

4. In a statement published on March 25 in every major newspaper, Foreign Minister Oskanian was more direct in dismissing the prospect of revolution in Armenia. After giving a nod to supporting "the will of the Kyrgyz people," FM Oskanian said, "the wave of revolution came to Armenia back in 1991, and ended then."

"INTERFERENCE OF THE WEST"

5. Some pro-government and opposition voices found harmony in dismissing the events in Kyrgyzstan as less than homegrown. On March 24, ARMINFO news agency reported comments made by the head of the parliamentary caucus of PM Markarian's Republican party, MP Sahakian: "The revolution in Kyrgyzstan took place due to the interference of the West, which is interested in strengthening its position in Central Asia." The ardently oppositionist Secretary of the 'Justice Bloc,' Viktor Dallakian, when asked about Kyrgyzstan at a press conference on March 25, responded, "Revolutions in the post-Soviet republics should come from nationwide movements rather than Western support. West-sponsored revolutionaries form puppet governments."

OPPOSITION - REVOLUTION COMING

6. At the same press conference Dallakian championed political change, but distanced his cause from the Kyrgyz and Georgian movements, saying, "I am sure

Armenia will be the first [country] in the CIS to carry out a truly national revolution." Notably, he tempered his rhetoric by ruling out violence, "Let those who blame us for indecision lead the people to bloodshed. The Justice Bloc will not risk its people for the sake of government change."

17. Aram Karapetian, a leader of the 'New Times Party,' was not as restrained. On March 30, as reported in all of the newspapers, he reaffirmed his call for "the civilized handover of power to the opposition...dissolving the parliament and dismissing the government," and warned, "otherwise there will be a revolution from 'the bottom,' which will be tougher and more brutal. The time has come for real action."

GOAM - REMEMBER NK

18. Challenged by such revolutionary talk, the GOAM's rhetoric has returned reflexively to Nagorno Karabakh. The Defense Minister, Serzh Sargsyan, warned in an interview with RFE/RL on March 31, that the constant threat of renewed conflict with Azerbaijan means "Armenia would face destruction in the event of domestic turmoil." He continued, "Our victory would depend on the extent to which the Armenian people, Armenia's political force, will stand with the Army." MOD Sargsyan's comments come at a time when incidents of sniper fire across the NK line of contact appear in the papers daily, and the Foreign Ministers and Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan are scheduled to meet to discuss the NK conflict before the end of May.
EVANS